3 EXAMINATION OF MEDIA

3.1 Purpose

To perform a preliminary examination of submitted multimedia to determine if there are any apparent physical problems with the media; to determine the original status of the media submitted and to protect against inadvertent media alteration during the forensic analysis; and to determine possible safety measures needed by the examiner.

3.2 Scope

This procedure applies to all types of submitted media such as film, audio and video recordings and digital media**.**

The following equipment and materials may be utilized:

- Low power magnifier
- Permanent marker
- Adhesive labels
- Protective gear

3.3 Limitations

None for this procedure

3.4 Safety

When subsequent examinations are required on the evidence, gloves must be worn to protect the evidence from loss, cross-transfer, contamination, and/or deleterious change. Examples are latent print examination, forensic biology, etc.

It is recommended that protective gloves and eye wear be worn when foreign susbstance(s) are present since it may carry the potential of blood borne pathogens or other harmful substances.

3.5 Procedures

Perform steps 3.2 -3.4 in the appropriate order, as determined by the examiner and document findings in case notes.

3.5.1 Physical Inspection

3.5.1.1 Inspect the submitted evidence and record the media's individual characteristics in case notes, such as media type, brand, size and external markings. This documentation may be in the form of a photo copy or hand written notes.

3.5.1.2 Conduct a physical inspection of foreign substance(s) such as dirt or residue. If present, the media will require cleaning. If magnetic media requires cleaning, see Magnetic Tape Repair/Reconstruction (Section-12).

3.5.1.3 Conduct a physical inspection of the multimedia for possible mechanical defects that may effect playback. Examine the evidence utilizing a low powered magnifier, if necessary, to identify housing damage. If the media or cassette is damaged, see Magnetic Tape Repair/Reconstruction (Section-12).

3.5.1.4 Place the laboratory's unique identifier and examiner's initials on the evidence using a permanent marker. The location is to be determined by the examiner. The labeling process should neither interfere with additional examinations nor damage the evidence.

3.6 Overwrite Protection

3.6.1 Submitted media will be examined to determine if it has a device (mechanical or otherwise) that prevents overwriting (re-recording); if so, employ that device. If the media is analog, the safety record tabs will be removed and secured onto a card no less than 3"x5", and that card will reflect the FS lab number, item number and examiner's initials. The card will be returned with the original submitted evidence.

3.7 References

Owner's Manuals, User's Manuals and vendor specific manuals should be referenced for equipment operating instructions.

Best Practices for Seizing Electronic Evidence a Pocket Guide for First Responders. 3rd ed. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Homeland Security, United States Secret Service.

Koening, B. E., "Enhancement of Forensic Audio Recordings" Journal of the Audio Engineering Society, Vol. 36 #11, pp. 994-998 (1988 Nov.)

Utz, Peter. Today's Video. 4th ed. Jefferson, NC: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2006.

♦**End**